

ISSUE

02

FEBRUARY
2015

The Personnel File

Galveston County Human Resources

Heads up...
A look at
things to come

February 11 & 12

TCDRS and AUL
retirement seminars

February 25

Completed performance
reviews returned to HR

March 19 & 20

Mid-year benefits and
wellness fair.

March 26

Advanced Hiring Class

April

Next Employee
Engagement Survey



The "Real" Interview

By: Brandy Chapman, Chief Deputy, County Clerk's Office

Interviewing applicants has always been a challenge for me personally. When an employee would leave our office, the feeling of dread would come over me. It meant a full week of interviewing and praying we would get a "good" employee.

I had never been formally trained in the interview process. I participated in the interviewing of applicants with the County Clerk and learned what questions weren't legally allowed to be asked. We would explain the job duties, the benefits and the dress code. It was quite a simple process. However, the decision part was really hard. We really didn't get a feel for the applicant. They would say yes to every question we asked and it would be very awkward.

Occasionally, six months to a year later we would find the person might not be the best fit. I'm learning this is a very costly error on our part. Training time alone is a very big drain on our resources. Human Resources recently held a class for the hiring process. I didn't think I would take anything away by attending. However, I was pleasantly surprised with a wealth of useful information. It provided helpful cues and questions that I am able to actually use in our interviews now. We were even shown how to catch the red flags on applications that I never noticed before.

Our office recently interviewed for a position and I used the questions from our class. I was shocked because it actually made the applicants open up. It made the applicant feel at ease, as well as myself. Human Resources also offered to prescreen our applicants in the future, which will save us a lot of time. I can't thank Human Resources enough for providing us this valuable training.

Editors Note: if you are interested in taking the class that Brandy is referring to, Human Resources will be offering another opportunity on **Thursday, March 26**. For more information or to RSVP please contact Peri Bluemer at 409-770-5350 or peri.bluemer@co.galveston.tx.us

Retirement Seminars

Upcoming meetings to help you navigate through the complexities of planning for retirement

If you are thinking about retiring sometime in the near future or you just want more information regarding retirement with Galveston County then plan on attending one of the informative retirement seminars being offered in February.

Human Resources is working closely with representatives from Texas County & District Retirement System (TCDRS) and First Financial to offer you a chance to come out and discuss your options in person. This will help you get a good feel of what retirement might look like for you. Get estimates on your monthly pension payment, learn how medical works as a retiree and even how Medicare impacts your coverage.

Have you ever worked for another employer and paid into Social Security and want to know who that will impact you? We've got that covered as well. Come out and see us with all of your questions!

The Basics

TCDRS

- You contribute **7%** of your gross pay
- You also earn **7%** interest annually
- Vesting period is **8** years of service
- For vested employees, the County will match your account at **200%** at the time of retirement

The Alternate Plan (AUL)

- Employees contribute **6.13%** of their gross salary on a pre-tax basis into a private account.
- The County contributes an additional **3.607%**
- Your account balance is guaranteed to earn **3.75%** interest annually



Wednesday, February 11

9:00am - 11:00am

Old Courthouse, HR Training Room
722 Moody (21st Street), 3rd Floor
Galveston, TX 77550

2:00pm - 4:00pm

Justice Center, Jury Assembly Room
600 59th Street, 1st Floor
Galveston, TX 77551

Thursday, February 12

9:00am - 11:00am

League City Annex, JP Courtroom
174 Calder Road
League City, TX 77573

2:00pm - 4:00pm

West County Annex, JP Courtroom
11730 Highway 6
Santa Fe, TX 77510

Because these meetings are held during normal business hours and are paid time for hourly employees, please check with your supervisor before you attend.

**Kathy Branch, Corey Jannett &
Christie Motogbe from HR will be
in attendance at each meeting to
answer your questions.**

Thank You For Your Service

Galveston County Bids Farewell to Commissioner Kevin O'Brien

On Tuesday, December 23, 2014 at 10:07am County Judge Mark Henry gave commissioners court into session. Court started as it typically does as a local eagle scout candidate led the pledges. But this was no normal session of court. This was the last time that Commissioner Kevin O'Brien would be present at the dais during a regular meeting of commissioners court. Mr. O'Brien served on Commissioners Court from 2011 - 2015 representing precinct 2. We salute his service to Galveston County employees and his leadership and dedication over the past four years. We wish both he and his wife, Beverly, the best.



Also, we welcome former Chief Deputy Constable Joe Giusti to Commissioners Court!

Staying Fresh With Your Benefits

Important Information Regarding Aflac & Lincoln Short-Term Disability Coverage

If you were enrolled in at least one of the products offered by Aflac in 2014 you need to take immediate action before your coverage lapses. Effective 12/31/2014 premiums for Aflac coverage are no longer deducted through payroll. If you wish to keep your policy for 2015, please be sure to arrange to convert your policy to a direct pay method by contacting Barbara Meeks at 281-236-3566. Also, any employee who did not fill out a change form during open enrollment in October 2014 and still wants to keep their policies can do so by PHONE! Simply call Aflac at 1-800-99 AFLAC (800-992-3522) and provide your bank or debit card information over the phone. It is that easy! If you take care of this soon, your payment will process right away and there will be no need to remit premium or risk a lapse in coverage. If you have any questions regarding Aflac, please contact Barbara Meeks.

A short-term disability plan through Lincoln Financial Group is one of the many products that are offered at Galveston County. This plan offers you income protection when you are disabled and cannot work. Plan benefits are paid directly to you and can be used however you like. Consider it insurance on your income!

Features

- Pays you 60% of your weekly salary up to \$1,750 per week after you exhaust all available paid leave such as vacation, sick and comp. time.
- 8th, 15th & 31st day waiting periods available.
- Maximum benefit duration of 26 weeks.
- Once you satisfy the 180 elimination period for long-term disability (LTD), your short-term disability (STD) will automatically rollover to LTD without a separate claim process.

If you enroll in this coverage, Lincoln Financial does not mail out a copy of the individual policy. However, you do have the ability to set up online account access at lincoln4benefits.com to view a wide array of information regarding your short-term disability coverage.

Sneak a Peek in the File of...

Name: **Jennifer Shehee**

Department: **Tax Office**

How long have you been with the County? **I started on May 12, 2014 as a Customer Service Representative and now I am the Administrative Secretary.**

What is your favorite pastime or hobby and why? **My favorite pastime is spending time with my family and friends and continuing traditions of going to annual events such as, The Texas State Fair, Dallas Summer Musicals, a variety of Theater productions and of course celebrating the Holidays!**

Yes, I confess, my nickname was/is: **Jenn-Jenn, Red, or J. I'm guessing Jennifer is just too long.**

What is something that everyone may not know about your department? **Every employee will cross train in another department at some point so that we will all have an understanding about what each department is all about and how they are all connected somehow.**

What is your personal motto or what would you like it to be? **Whatever you decide to do, Make sure it makes you happy!**

Best memory working for the county? **I would have to say my best memory is the day I got the call to come work for Galveston County and getting the opportunity to meet and work with some amazing people.**



Name: **Nathan Sigler**

Department: **Engineering**

How long have you been with the County? **7 years**

What is your favorite pastime or hobby and why? **Hotrods: I have had a passion for fast cars every since I was a kid; it was something my Dad got me into.**

Yes, I confess, my nickname was/is: **Nate**

What is something that everyone may not know about your department? **We have a lot of Historical maps that go back to the 1800's.**

What is your personal motto or what would you like it to be? **Sometimes you succeed and other times you learn.**

Best memory working for the county? **The Christmas and Halloween Parties**

There is a new face in HR!

Please join us in welcoming Misty Cuellar to the Galveston County Family! Misty is the new Human Resources receptionist. Our former receptionist, Amanda Shirey, is getting promoted! See our the next issue of our newsletter for details.

February 2015 Employee Birthdays

1 Devaney, Richard B	9 Maldonado, Louis A	20 Deem-McMeekin, Tracy D
1 Rogers, Anthony C	9 Scarbrough, Lynn A	20 Shehee, Jennifer L
2 Norris, Melissa A	10 Ochoa, Lionel W	21 Haynes, William B
2 Sanders, Sabrina N	11 Arcega, Froylan A	21 Scott, Belinda R
2 Williams, Ray A	11 Boemer, Robert B	21 Scott, Linda F
3 D'Ambra, Linda J	11 Cora, Willishia B	22 Johnson, Sandra I
3 Gerhardt, Robertta L	11 Hernandez Jr., Eduardo	22 Martinez III, Jose M
3 Hurt, Stephen C	11 Stewart, Robert D	22 Stringer, Troy R
3 Murphy, Dennis P	12 Hart, Jessica H	23 Cooper Sr., Anthony
3 Sanders, Earnestine L	12 Hayes, Gregory M	23 Evans, Roshandra M
4 Bulanek, Kristin R	13 Thomas, Tammy Y	23 Fillmore, Derik T
4 Sanchez Jr, John	14 Barton, Luke O	23 Freeman, Kelly W
5 Bouvier, Johnathan W	14 Fitzgerald, Gerald M	23 Khaled, Jesse J
5 Cook, Wayne L	14 McDaniel, Brandi N	23 Reeves Sr., Roderick
5 Tubbs, Michael D	15 Fearrington, Pamela A	24 Ewing, Melissa K
5 York, Avis R	15 Hall, Travis Lee	24 Jones, Megan S
6 Mosley, Leroy E	15 Olvera Jr., Mario	24 New, Shelbie D
7 Fullen, James P	16 Dunne-Burnett, Jennifer J	25 Williams, Kenneth V
7 Honish, Laura B	17 Page, Jeffrey M	26 Juarez-Delgado, Joseph E
7 Johnson, Monique M	18 Cora Jr., Felix G	26 Kirby, Rebecca D
7 Stallings, Andrew D	19 Carrillo, Nicholas R	27 Rains, Grant G
8 Killgore, Stacy L	19 Clark, Gary M	27 Trocheset, Louis W
8 Stubblefield, Sherri A	19 Walk, Anne Marie E	27 Waycott, Leslie D
9 Johnson, Yolanda F	19 Young, Pamela D	28 Huffstetler, Jacob
		28 Minetti, Brandon J

Manager Tip of the Month

Straight Talk about Performance Reviews... with Annual Performance Reviews due on the 15th of this month I would like to share my experience while attending The Practical Coach class taught in our new Galveston County Staff University aka the HR Training Room. The class starts with introductions that include a fun ice-breaker. Also expect some role-playing and group exercises throughout the class. Here are a few highlights from the class.

Keep your employees engaged. Bored employees are neither happy nor productive. To keep your employees engaged and satisfied present them with challenging assignments and opportunities to grow and develop. Consider ways to provide opportunities for employees to improve on their skills or learn new skills they can use in their jobs.

Give praise where praise is due. If someone does a great job, let them know. And then let co-workers and customers know. Recognizing a job well done isn't an expensive proposition, but it will mean the world to your employee.

Follow up on your coaching. Set a meeting time to catch up on their progress. Ask the employee to restate the corrective tactic. Express appreciation for the positive changes you have noticed.

And most importantly, Performance Reviews are an on-going process. There should be no surprises. Comments should have already been discussed with the employee during the year.

If you did not have an opportunity to attend the coaching class, I highly recommend you catch one of the upcoming classes. Peri and I are 100% happy to help you with the process.

Your Employee Relations Whiz,
Kathy Branch

The Last Word...

Hello all! I hope you enjoyed the January newsletter. Please know that we are very open to suggestions and article ideas, so send them to me at peri.bluemmer@co.galveston.tx.us!

On New Year's Day I was excited to attend the swearing in of all of our newly elected officials. Judge Mark Henry was the Master of Ceremonies and it was a moving experience for all. Watching them taking their oaths with their friends and family standing next to them, being sworn into office, I realized that this must be one of the most emotional and powerful experiences in their lives.

Officials can choose who they would like to swear them into office. Many chose their spouses and it was a real treat to see Judge John Grady swear in his wife Patricia and then in turn she did the same for him. Some chose their personal heroes. Judge Schweitzer was sworn in by Mr. Birney T. Havey a recipient of the Silver Star in WWII.



John Kinard, District Clerk

After taking the oath, each newly sworn in official had an opportunity to say a few words. There wasn't a dry eye in the house when JP Alison Cox made her thank you's. Many were celebrating several years in office. Seeing JP Penny Pope's daughter standing proudly next to her and hearing that she was just a baby when Judge Pope began working in Galveston County, really put into perspective the years of experience we had in that room.

County Treasurer, Kevin Walsh, said something that really stuck with me. He thanked his staff. Many of them did. But Kevin nailed when he said, "You cannot be successful without an excellent team supporting you." No ifs, ands or buts; you **cannot** be successful. WOW! Every good manager I have ever met feels the same way. No one can run the County all alone.

Just like I ask managers to remember how valuable their teams are to the success of their own jobs, I want to ask each of you to remember your role in the overall success of our County. Employees aren't asked to stand before the world and make an oath. But, what if you were? Think about it... are you ready to take an Employee of Galveston County Oath?

I, _____, promise to be the very best I can be in serving Galveston County. I swear not to cut corners, to deliver every duty in my job description to the best of my ability. I commit myself to having a great attitude at work and to hold myself accountable to all the persons I support.

It may sound corny, but what would happen if we tried saying that out loud every once and a while? What if your loved one looked you in the eye and asked you to swear? How would that feel? Just a thought!



Congratulations to all of the new and the re-elected officials and thank you for taking YOUR oath!

BE the change you want to see in others,

Peri Bluemer

CHRO